

## Harold Shaw



Photo courtesy of Mrs D. Raine of White Lee (sister)

Sergeant (Air Gunner) Harold Shaw 1811658 Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve 463 Squadron, Royal Australian Air Force.

Died 11<sup>th</sup> March 1945 Buried Heckmondwike Cemetery Section L Grave 11.

Harold was born in 1924 in Batley, the only son of Vernon and Mary Jane Shaw (nee Popplewell). Dorothy was born in 1926. Harold was educated at Healey Senior School and attended Batley Road, Methodist Chapel. Harold later worked at Messrs J. Sykes, (timber merchants) prior to joining the RAF in 1943, being one of the first to join from Heckmondwike Squadron of the A.T.C.

Before 1939 the family had moved from Healey to live at Cambridge Street, Heckmondwike.

The 463 Squadron was formed in 5 Group, Bomber Command, on November 25, 1943 and flew Lancaster's from Waddington until the end of the war. The squadron flew 2,525 Lancaster sorties and lost 69 aircraft (2.7%) in 180 bombing raids. The squadron suffered the highest percentage loss in Australian squadrons. It often carried cameramen of the R.A.F. Film Unit.

Sergeant Shaw was killed when his aircraft Lancaster LM 130, collided in mid-air with Hurricane P2740 while the Lancaster was on a training exercise. All the crew of the Lancaster died as well as the pilot of the Hurricane. It is thought that the Hurricane had been damaged in combat and had been ordered to land elsewhere but was trying to make it back to base. The accident happened above Blankney, 9 miles north of Sleaford.

Harold was awarded the 1939-45 Star and the 1939-1945 War Medal

He is remembered with honour at Batley RAFA and Heckmondwike War Memorial.



Thanks to Bill Berry.